

Avalanche Shuts Highway 189, Buries Business

By Taylor Syphus
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

PROVO — David Grow had his livelihood wiped out early Wednesday morning when a wall of snow 1,000 feet wide plunged over Bridal Veil Falls in Provo Canyon and buried his business.

"We don't have the resources to rebuild," Grow said as he surveyed the destruction caused by the avalanche that broke loose about 2 a.m. and poured over the aptly named Cascade Mountain.

The Provo resident owns the concessions at the waterfall, which is popular with summer visitors and features one of the world's steepest trams. The tram provided an aerial view of the falls. Grow also maintained snack and gift shops at the site, and two railroad cars, one of them an antique caboose.

Wednesday they all lay under 60 feet of snow, which also blocked the Provo River.

"It's hard to give up," Grow said. None of the damaged structures was insured.

Damage estimates have ranged from \$500,000 to \$1 million.

Fearing the natural dam would cause flooding in the Utah County community of Springdell, a mile below the falls, officials evacuated about 100 residents from 25 houses about 4 a.m. Wednesday. However, all were allowed to return to their homes after workers at Deer Creek Reservoir diverted the water that would have flowed down the river.

By 6 p.m., the snow blocking the river had been undercut by the backed-up water and officials expected the river's flow to be running at normal levels today.

Kevin Griffith, avalanche control specialist for the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), said the avalanche started at 10,400 feet above sea level on the south side of the canyon and fell more than 5,000 feet, plowed across U.S. Highway 189 and traveled 200 feet up the canyon's north side, leaving a 1,000-foot-wide swath of snow littered with debris.

As the snow ripped through ravines, it pushed 200-mph winds before it, uprooting and splintering trees like matchsticks.

A 70-foot-long boxcar that Grow used for storage at the falls

Massive Slide Pours Into Provo Canyon

THURSDAY, February 1, 1996

The Salt Lake Tribune



Weber Davis Salt Lake Utah
Red - Wood Burning Prohibited
Yellow - Wood Burning Discouraged
Green - Wood Burning Allowed
AIR QUALITY - 633-7239

Utah

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